

Speaking About Others

In *Lessons from Mom*, Joan Aho Ryan writes about loyalty in friendship.

“We went to one of the local shopping malls recently where Mom ran into two women who live in her development,” Ryan said. “They greeted her effusively. It was a brief exchange, during which she introduced me, and they were on their way. ‘What phony baloney,’ Mom said excitedly when they were well ahead of us. Since her remark came from nowhere, I asked her what she meant.

“With obvious disdain, she explained that she has sat under the canopy at her pool on several occasions with these two women and one of their friends, Sylvia. One day, she said, she sat nearby and heard the three of them talking about the wedding reception of Sylvia’s daughter the week before. They raved about the food, the flowers, the elegant country club location, the beautiful bride. Mom said Sylvia was obviously beaming with pride.

“Well, then, Sylvia left, and you should have heard them,’ Mom said. ‘I couldn’t believe friends could be that two-faced. They ripped her apart, talking about how cheap she was, her homely son-in-law, the music they couldn’t dance to. It was awful. And they call themselves friends,’ she chuckled. ‘Who needs friends like that?’”

Ryan’s story drives home a major principle in human relationships: Speaking well of others is not only a good way to acquire friends, but to keep them.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace upon the hearers (Ephesians 4:29).

--Beecher Hunter